

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-15 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05
EPG-02 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06
LAB-04 SIL-01 HEW-06 HUD-02 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-09
EUR-12 NEA-10 FEA-01 OES-07 /166 W
-----077252 160905Z /20

R 151832Z JUL 77

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9281

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS GENEVA 5891

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECOSOC

SUBJ: 63RD ECOSOC: GENERAL DEBATE

1. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENTS OF
ECA, ECE, ESCAP, ECWA, AND ITALY MADE IN ECOSOC PLENARY MORNING
OF JULY 14.

2. ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA): ESEC. SEC. ADEDEJI
GAVE A GLOOMY ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF AFRICA'S
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING THE REGION
INCLUDE 1) A 4.5 0/0 AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE BETWEEN 1960 AND
1975 WHICH IS FAR BELOW TARGETS SET BY THE I AND II DEVELOPMENT
DECADES, 2) A VERY POOR PERFORMANCE BY THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR,
3) A DEBT BURDEN THAT INCREASED FROM \$7 BILLION IN 1965 TO \$28
IN 1974, AND 4) AN ECONOMY THAT IS OVERLY AFFECTED BY CYCLICAL
FLUCTUATIONS IN THE ECONOMIES OF INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS. HE
SAID AFRICAN NATIONS CAN BE PLACED IN FIVE ECONOMIC CATEGORIES,
ONE FOR THE OIL EXPORTERS AND FOUR FOR THE NON-OIL EXPORTERS
BASED ON PER CAPITA INCOME. ONLY NINE COUNTRIES AMONG ALL THE
CATEGORIES HAD RESPECTABLE RATES OF DEVELOPMENT. HE EMPHASIZED
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ADOPTION BY THE DEC. 1976 OAU COUNCIL OF
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MINISTERS OF THE REVISED FRAMEWORK OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE IMPLEMEN-
TATION OF NIEO IN AFRICA AND DECLARED THE SINE QUA NON FOR THE
ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC GOALS WAS ECONOMIC COOPER-
ATION AMONG AFRICAN COUNTRIES. THE ECA MEDIUM TERM PLAN FOR
1978-81 WILL PLACE EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY, THE
TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE AND THE PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT
IN THE RURAL SECTOR. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RES. 291 (XIII) ON A

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN AFRICA WAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO ECA. ADEDEJI CONCLUDED BY STRESSING THAT THE OECD COUNTRIES MUST ACCEPT "FULL RESPONSIBILITY" FOR SUPPORTING AFRICA'S EFFORTS TO GET OUT OF ITS PRESENT ECONOMIC QUAGMIRE.

3. ITALY: IN A VERY GENERAL SPEECH AMB. VINCI REVIEWED THE WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION AND PROSPECTS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE. TURN-INT TO SPECIFICS, HE SAID THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION OF THE ILO WORLD EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE WAS THE NEW THEORY OF BASIC NEEDS WHICH HAS BECOME A 'MAJOR PILLAR' OF THE NEW ECONOMIC STRATEGY. NEW STRATEGIES THAT ARISE OUT OF THE SECOND DEVELOPMENT DECADE SHOULD BE GEARED TOWARD DEALING WITH DEBT AND TRADE STABILIZATION AND ANY NEW STRATEGY MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE THE NEED OF PRIVATE INITIATIVE IN HELPING THE LDCS. IN LINE WITH THIS LAST POINT, ECOSOC MUST CREATE MACHINERY TO END THE PRACTICE OF ILLICIT PAY-MENTS AS WELL AS TO CONCLUDE A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TNCs. WITH RESPECT TO ENERGY, AN INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY SHOULD BE SET UP TO AID COUNTRIES IN DISCOVERING NEW AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES.

4. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP): EXEC. SEC. MARAMIS SAID THAT BECAUSE OF AN ABSENCE OF WAR, FAVORABLE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS, AND HEAVY ADDITIONAL BORROWINGS THE LAST BIENNIUM SAW ENCOURAGING SIGNS AMONG ESCAP LDCS WITH RESPECT TO AGGREGATE AS WELL AS SECTORAL COMPONENTS OF GROWTH. HOWEVER, A MAJORITY OF ESCAP LDC'S DID NOT MEET GROWTH UNCLASSIFIED

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TARGETS SET IN THE IDS. ADVERSE MOVEMENTS IN THE TERMS OF TRADE, DEBT BURDENS, AND HIGH IMPORT COSTS FOR OIL AND INDUSTRIAL MATERIALS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SITUATION WHICH CAN BE PARTIALLY ALLEVIATED BY DEBT RELIEF AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMON FUND. NOT ONLY DO EXTERNAL RESTRAINTS HINDER GROWTH, BUT ALSO INTERNAL WEAKNESSES. THEREFORE, THE OVERRIDING CONCERN OF GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION FOR THE YEARS TO COME WAS THE ALLEVIATION OF

MASS POVERTY. WITHOUT OFFERING ANY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS, MARAMIS SAID POPULATION POLICIES MUST BE GEARED TO ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND THAT POVERTY CAN BE ERADICATED THROUGH THE CONTEXT OF AN INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, THE LATTER OF WHICH ESCAP ADOPTED AT ITS RECENTLY CONCLUDED SESSION.

5. ECE EXEC. SEC. STANOVNIK BRIEFLY REVIEWED ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE WITHIN REGION IN 1976 BUT DEALT IN STATEMENT MAINLY WITH ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EAST-WEST TRADE. CHARACTERIZED OVERALL ECONOMIC TREND WITHIN REGION IN 1976 AS RELATIVELY SLOW RECOVERY FROM SEVERE RECESSION, WITH GROWTH RATE IN WESTERN EUROPE OF ONLY 4 0/0, IN EASTERN EUROPE 5 0/0 AND NORTH AMERICA 6 0/0. MOST NOTEWORTHY FEATURE WAS REMARKABLE 15 0/0 INCREASE IN IMPORTS INTO REGION, WHICH SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN GROWTH IN

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTIVITY, THUS INDICATING SUBSTANTIAL REPLENISHMENT OF INVENTORIES. EXPORTS GREW BY 11 0/0 BUT WAS MAINLY WITHIN ECE REGION AND TO OIL PRODUCERS, WITH EXPORTS TO OTHER LDCS ONLY GROWING BY 3 0/0. WITH REGARD TO EAST-WEST TRADE, STANOVNIK NOTED THAT IMPORTS FROM THE EAST GREW BY 17 0/0 IN 1976, WHILE EXPORTS TO THE EAST ONLY INCREASED BY 5 0/0. HE FELT THIS GROWTH OF IMPORTS WAS ENCOURAGING ALTHOUGH MUCH GREATER INCREASES STILL REQUIRED IF EAST-WEST TRADE IS TO BE TRULY STABILIZED ON LONG-TERM BASIS. EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION THAT FINANCING NOW AVAILABLE TO SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND SAID FACT THAT THEY WILLING TO INCUR INDEBTEDNESS INDICATES THEY ARE ORIENTING THEIR POLICIES TOWARD LONG-TERM COOPERATION WITH THE WEST. STANOVNIK SAID WESTERN ECONOMIES CURRENTLY SUFFERING FROM SLUGGISH INVESTMENT, HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

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AND HIGH RATES OF INFLATION. SOLUTION TO THIS WAS INCREASED INVESTMENT WHICH, HOWEVER, NOT FORTHCOMING TO SUFFICIENT DEGREE BECAUSE OF "INTERNATIONAL UNCERTAINTIES." REVIVAL OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WEST LINKED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF NIEO, HE SAID, WHICH IS THUS ALSO IN SELF-INTEREST OF INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES.

6. ECWA EXEC. SEC. AL ATTAR SAID INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD NOT ALLOW ITSELF TO BE DISCOURAGED BY FACT THAT CIEC ACHIEVED ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS. THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO CONTINUED NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE. HE EXTOLLED PERFORMANCE OF FIVE OPEC MEMBERS OF ECWA REGION WITH RESPECT TO THEIR CONCESSIONAL ASSISTANCE TO LDCS, WHICH REACHED \$17.7 BILLION IN PERIOD JANUARY 1973 -- JUNE 1975. THESE SAME COUNTRIES, HE SAID, HAVE INVESTED \$88.6 BILLION IN INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD IN 1974-76 PERIOD. THIS SHOULD HELP DISPEL FEARS OF BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DIFFICULTIES, HE FELT. AL ATTAR ALSO DREW ATTENTION TO CRITICAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS OF ECWA WHICH IS MAJOR OBSTACLE TO DIVERSIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION BUT SAID PROBLEM IS BEING ADDRESSED VIGOROUSLY. HE CONCLUDED BY CALLING FOR CONTINUED INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF LEBANON AND NOTED THAT ECWA SECRETARIAT ABOUT TO COMPLETE ITS MOVE BACK TO BEIRUT.

VANDEN HEUVEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEBATES, TEXT, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977GENEVA05891
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770253-1140
Format: TEL
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770754/aaaabukl.tel
Line Count: 158
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bb51c06a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1851672
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: 63RD ECOSOC: GENERAL DEBATE
TAGS: PORG, ECOSOC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bb51c06a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009